Clynnog

ITS SAINT

AND CHURCH

By The Rev. R. D. ROBERTS,
Vicar. (1950—1955).

12P

Clynnog Fawr

It's Saint and his Church

CHRISTIANITY no doubt spread into Wales hardly before the fifth century. The church founded in Wales was probably an integral portion of the Roman British Church, and was not at this stage monastic. It was governed by bishops, and agreed in faith and doctrine with the Church of the West.

In the sixth century the monastic spirit of the School of Llantwit-Major and of the three blessed visitors, Dewi, Teilo and Padarn captured the imagination of the Welsh celt. When Gildas (the famous sixth century writer) closed his eyes in the far distant Breton monastery, the yellow plague, the internal strife, and the renewal of the Saxon advance which Gildas deemed that Badon Hill had checked for ever, had blotted out the world that he knew. The Roman municipum and villa had disappeared, the sees of the British Church were no more, all links between Britain and the mainland were severed; but the Celtic monasteries under their abbot-bishops were saving from the old world the Christian faith and some relics of the Classic Culture.

Of the Saints of Wales, St. David is the only one canonised by the Roman Church. " The fame he acquired in later ages, culminating in his adoption by Welshmen generally as the patron saint of their country, is to be explained by the very large number of churches in all parts of South Wales which were regarded as under his protection." (Lloyd, J. E., *History of Wales*).

St. Beuno no doubt ranks among Welsh saints second only to St. David.

" There are (writes Prof. E. G. Bowen* of Aberystwyth) no indigenous saints in the North East comparable in importance and antiquity to SS. Dubricius, Cadoc and Illtyd. The only possible exception is the Powysian Saint Beuno, but all the

*The Saints of Gwynedd. Caernarvonshire Historical Society *Transactions* 1948 vol. 9. p. 1.

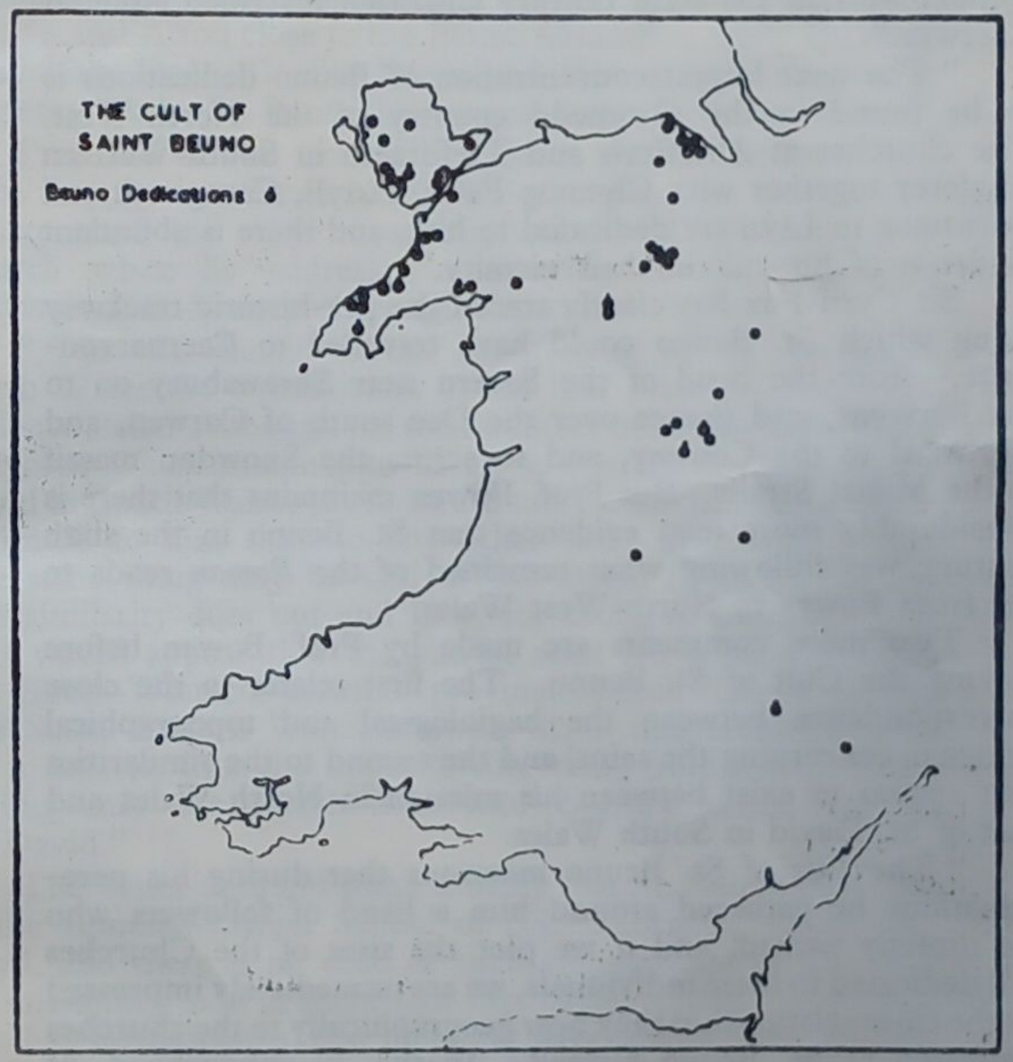
circumstantial evidence we possess suggests that he comes very late into the story, and that even in his case there survived into the middle ages a persistent tradition that he received his education in the South East."

Our authority for the history of Beuno is contained in a document printed in Llyfr Anĉr—(the book of the Anchorite) written at Llanddewi Brefi in 1346.

" Beuno was the son of Hywgi or Bugi ap Gwynlliw Filwr, and Perferen, daughter of Llawdden Lwyddog of Dinas Eiddin in the north. He lived in the sixth century, and his life extended to the following, as it is recorded that he founded a religious society at Clynnog Fawr in Caernarvonshire in the year 616. The land on which the Monastery or College of Clynnog Fawr was built was given by Cadfan, the reigning prince of North Wales, to whom St. Beuno gave a small golden sceptre as an acknowledgement for the gift. In his old age he was one of the instructors of Gwenfrewi or St. Winifred; his festival is holden on April 21."

" There is nothing (says Prof. Bowen) in the distribution pattern formed by the Churches known to be dedicated to St. Beuno which is inconsistent with the traditions which survived into the middle ages concerning the field of his labours. He has churches dedicated to him in four regions of Eastern Wales. His most southerly church is at Llanfeuno-under-Clodock in South-western Herefordshire, situated close to the Roman Road that linked Gobannium to Kenchester,—a memorial possibly of St. Beuno's contacts with South Eastern Wales."

" The other areas where the Beuno cult is found in Eastern Wales are clearly related to the three outposts of Gaulo-Roman Christianity. There is Berriew and Betws Cedewain in eastern Montgomeryshire, not far from Llanerfyl, and situated along a well-marked strip of Roman road linking the fort at Caersws to that at Forden. In this district Beuno is said to have been born. Further north we have Gwyddelwern dedicated to St. Beuno. Nearby is his holy well, with another bearing his name at Betws Gwerfyl Goch. Gwyddelwern is on the Roman road running between Caer Gai and Ffrith, while the Clocaenog stone is not far away. In the extreme North-East Whitford



Caernarvonshire Historical Society

Church was originally dedicated to St. Beuno, and he possesses an ancient chapel at Llanasa, and a holy well in Tremeirchion parish, and at Holywell itself. All these sites are closely associated with Roman remains in Flintshire, and in a similar context we find the sixth century Christian inscribed stone at Caerwys."

"The next largest concentration of Beuno dedications is to be found in the Gwynedd country of the North-West. The churches at Aberffraw and Trefdraeth in South-Western Anglesey together with Clynnog Fawr, Pistyll, Carngiwch and Botwnnog in Llŷn are dedicated to him, and there is abundant evidence of his cult in their vicinity."

Sir Cyril Fox has clearly traced the pre-historic trackway along which St. Beuno could have travelled to Caernarvonshire,—from the bend of the Severn near Shrewsbury on to the Berwyns, and thence over the Dee south of Corwen, and westward to the Conway, and so across the Snowdon massif to the Menai Straits. But Prof. Bowen maintains that there is considerably more map evidence that St. Beuno in the sixth century was following what remained of the *Roman* roads to get from Powys to North-West Wales.

Two more comments are made by Prof. Bowen before leaving the Cult of St. Beuno. The first relates to the close correspondence between the hagiological and topographical evidence concerning the saint, and the second to the similarities that appear to exist between his mission in North Wales and that of St. David in South Wales.

"The *Life* of St. Beuno mentions that during his peregrinations he gathered around him a band of followers who are directly named, and if we plot the sites of the Churches still dedicated to these individuals, we are immediately impressed by the close relationship they bear geographically to the churches dedicated to St. Beuno himself. In the neighbourhood of Berriew and Betws Cedewain we have Guilsfield dedicated to St. Aelhaearn; Llanengan and Llanwyddelan, dedicated to Llorcan Wyddel, and Llanllwchhaiarn and Llanmerewig both dedicated to Llwchhaiarn. These three saints are frequently mentioned in the *Vita*. Similarly, near Gwyddelwern, St. Aelhaearn had a chapel in former times which is now extinct,

while not far away is Llangwyfan, dedicated to St. Cwyfan, another of St. Beuno's followers. In the Whitford area of Flintshire the Beuno dedications are closely associated with those of St. Winifred. In Llŷn and Anglesey the same feature is shown. SS. Aelhaearn, Cwyfan, Edern, Deiniolfab and Twrog, all of whom are mentioned in the Vita have dedications in Llŷn and Arfon close to the Beuno Churches, while Cwyfan, Deiniolfab, Dona, Ceidio, Edern and Twrog appear again in Anglesey where St. Beuno has several important dedications."

Professor Bowen strongly maintains that St. Beuno ought to be the patron saint of North Wales and not St. David, and he expressed his views most emphatically at Clynnog Fawr Church when he addressed a meeting of the Cambrian Archæological Society there in September 1952.

"That St. Beuno is the counterpart of St. David in North Wales (he writes) rests in the first place on numerical evidence alone. Although the total number of Beuno dedications in North Wales amounts to barely a quarter of those of St. David in South Wales, yet there are more churches and chapels dedicated to him than to any other saint in North Wales. The same thing may be said of St. David in South Wales. The similarity does not end here, for much in the same way as it would appear that the patron saint led a mission from the South-Western cultural province which finally spread into South-Eastern Wales, likewise St. Beuno seems to have led a mission into the opposite direction, from Powys overspilling into the North-West into country untouched by St. David."

The writer does not think it likely that St. Beuno belonged to the Romano-British School of SS. Dubricius, Cadoc and Illtyd, and there is no echo of such a suggestion in his *Life*; his missionary zeal is more like that of St. David. It is even possible, he maintains, that he might have been a contemporary of the patron saint, or possibly followed him a generation later. In any case Beuno's settlement at Llanveynoe in South-Western Herefordshire is significant, for it is located in a region which on archaeological and hagiological grounds was closely linked with distant St. David's for many generations.

It may be then, that the Cults were linked, representing together a late phase in the spread of Celtic Christianity; Beuno carrying the Dewi asceticism over North Wales. Whatever our views may be, it is at least curious that a fourteenth century anchorite in one of Dewi's most famous cells in South Wales should have thought it worthwhile to re-write the *Life* of this otherwise exclusively northern saint in the same book as he rewrote the *Life* of St. David."

How Beuno came to Clynnog

KING CADFAN died about 616, and was succeeded by Cadwallon. Cadwallon and Edwin King of Northumbria were contemporaries, had been friends, but became rivals, and Edwin was killed in battle in 633, fighting against Cadwallon. Cadwallon himself was killed in 634 near Hexham.

Beuno visited the King, and made him a present of a gold sceptre that had been given to him by Cynan son of Brochwel, and in return Cadwallon assigned to Beuno a patch of land at Gwredog in Arfon. The saint went thither and erected a church, and began to throw up a bank to enclose his sanctuary. As he was thus engaged, a woman came to look on, carrying a babe in her arms, and asked Beuno to bless it. "Presently," he replied, "When this job is out of hand." Whilst he and his monks were engaged on the bank, the child cried lustily and disturbed him.

"Ha! Woman," said Beuno, "Why is the babe squealing so?"

"He has good reason to cry," replied the mother, "for you are enclosing land and appropriating it that belonged to his father, and is properly his."

When Beuno heard this, he shouted to his monks, "Take your hands from the work; and whilst I baptise the child, make ready my chariot. We will go to the king with this woman and babe."

So they set off for Caersaint (Caernarvon) where Cadwallon then was, and Beuno said to the king, "Why didst thou give

me the land when it was not thine to give, but belonged to this child? Give me other land or else return to me the gold sceptre worth sixty cows that I presented to thee."

"I will give thee nothing else," replied the King, "and as to the sceptre, I have already given it away."

Then Beuno in great wrath, cursed Cadwallon; "I pray to God that thou mayest not long possess the land."

So he departed, full of rage and disappointment, and when he had crossed the river Saint, he seated himself on a stone, when a cousin of Cadwallon came after him, whose name was Gwyddaint, and, "for his own soul and that of Cadwallon," offered him his own township at Clynnog, "without tribute or service, or anyone having any claim on it."

"This Beuno gladly accepted, and henceforth Clynnog became his principal residence." (Baring Gould and Fisher) "Lives of the British Saints"

This grant of land to Beuno was ratified over a stone. (Stone symbols were of great importance in the early Celtic Church). This stone called Maen Beuno is an old stone monument about 4 feet high, with an incised cross (traced according to local account by St. Beuno, with two strokes of his thumb). The cross measures fifteen inches by eight, and its extremities are clearly T shaped. For many years this stone stood at Bryn Seiont, Caernarvon where the old highway crossed the river, later it was moved to Bodwyn nearby, then to Aberglaslyn Hall some miles away. When the Hall was sold some years ago Mr. J. J. A. Williams (in whose care the stone was) kindly had it restored to its ancient home in St. Beuno's Chapel, where it remains.

The Clas

LITTLE is known of the early history of the Monastery at Clynnog Fawr. It was probably established in the seventh century, and its primitive form has been described as a type of the non-tribal portionary churches which no doubt soon developed into what was known as a "Clas" i.e. a clerical

community or monastery. In the "Privileges of Arvon," quoted in the *Welsh Laws*, it is stated that in the event of a dispute arising in regard to any of these regulations "Clas Bancor a rey Beuno a'u ceidw." Evidently an authoritative copy of them was to be kept at Clynnog and Bangor by the Clas.

'The "Clas" was an important and responsible body; it received the half of all payments made to the church, succeeded to the moveable property of the abbott when he died, and decided finally all disputes arising among its members. Though the "Claswyr" are not styled monks, but Canons, the title of their chief officer, the Abbot, and the manner in which they consumed in common the revenues of the church, afford strong evidence that the "Clas" was at first a monastery smaller no doubt than the great monastic establishments of the sixth and seventh centuries, but of the same general type, and in many cases carrying on the traditions of the age of the saints.' (J. E. Lloyd "*A History of Wales*)."

The "Clas" of Clynnog Fawr was no doubt, little inferior in importance to that of Bangor, and "Brut y Saeson" reckons it to be of sufficient importance to refer to' Simeon, Archdeacon of Clynnog, a man of eminent distinction.'

References to the "Clas" of Clynnog are also found in the ancient laws of Wales codified in the tenth century by Hywel Dda.

In that century Wales was continually attacked by the Danes, no part of its coast was wholly secure. The raiders, no doubt, were chiefly attracted by the plunder of the monasteries for most places raided by the foreigners were all sites of important churches. Holyhead was despoiled in 961, Towyn in 963, Penmon in 971, and Clynnog in 978.

The original church then was, no doubt, largely destroyed in these raids, but the foundations remained, and as there had been no great ritualistic or social change, the church was probably re-erected in the same form and on the same foundations. Its importance as a teaching centre cannot be doubted, for in 1151 again there was recorded in "Brut y Tywysogion" the death of an Archdeacon of Clynnog Fawr (Simeon) "the wisest of the scholars of Gwynedd."

Gradually the "Clasau" or "Communities" in Wales were extinguished; few remained by 1291, and these in time became known under the new name of "Collegiate Church," keeping a Rheithor (Rector) or Pennaeth (Chieftain) and portionists called "Canon" and "Prebendary."

What was the cause of the break-up of Clynnog as a monastic community we do not know. Poverty or some charge of irregularity might have brought it about; at any rate, during the confusion and upheaval of the Wars of Independence waged by the last Llewelyn against Edward I, it ceased to be an Abbey Church, and became a Collegiate Church, and retained its character as such until the time of Henry VIII, when it consisted according to the "Valor Ecclesiasticus," of five portionists, with a "præpositus" or provost, as head. There were then three chapelries, or daughter churches attached to it:—

1. Capella de Llan Unda et Llan Vaglan.
2. Capella de Llan Gelynyn.
3. Ecclesia de Llan Keynwen et Llan Kaffo.

There is an interesting parallel and a close connection between Beuno's foundation at Clynnog and Cybi's foundation at Holyhead. Both churches had become collegiate, the former with five canons or portionists, and the latter with four. Gruffydd ab Cynan, in the 12th century had left a like bequest to each of the two churches. Both churches were then Royal foundations, and the Crown probably appointed to all vacancies. Early in the 16th century (about 1535) a dispute arose between the Crown and the Bishop of Bangor, as to the right of patronage in regard to Clynnog Church.

The following extract has been taken from the Public Record Office, dated November 14th, 1537, at Caernarvon. It shows clearly that the Crown had claim to the patronage of Clynnog Church.

"The said Church of Clynnog Fawr is situate within the town of Clynnog, wherein the King is chief lord; and forasmuch as he doth understand and perceive by a book called "Graphus Sancti Beunoni," and by the sight of certain "Letters Patent," granted by King Edward IV, and a copy of the "King's Records," that the said Church of Clynnog

was of the King's presentation, and saith that he heard by divers ancient and credible persons that one Matthew Pole, Clerk, was presented by Prince Arthur to the said Church of Clynnog Fawr; therefore he saith that the King's Highness is very patron of the said Church, with other churches and chapels thereunto belonging."

The Present Building

THE present church is late perpendicular in character and may be assigned to the beginning of the 16th century. It was completed by about 1536, for Leland who visited it sometime between 1536 and 1539 describes it as a new church, and again "the fayrest chirch in al Cairnarvonshire and better than Bangor."

The tower and chapel were probably built soon after Leland's visit, in the prosperous years after the accession of Henry VII. The monks probably realised that their tenures would be abolished, and began spending all they could in building, running into debt in doing so, to evade loss of property.

The tower's architecture closely resembles that of the tower of Bangor Cathedral, which was built in 1532 and is probably the work of the same master mason.

'Long ago pilgrims thronged here, and it was for them, and largely by their alms that this shining white cross of a church was built . . . If you look closer at the windows, you will observe that generally the sculptured masonry surrounding the outward sections on either side takes the form of a candle and of the characteristic elongated flame which gathers about its wick. Unflickering and straight, the windows burn on thus for ever round the high altar.' (J. M. N. Jeffries, 1931).

The church is almost square in form, light and spacious. The windows are large, and the striking east window almost fills the east wall. In 1928—29 when the church was extensively restored these windows were repaired, and the leaded panes filled with a faintly translucent glass. The high pews

or "dozing pens" were removed, and the floors were lowered to their original level.

At one time, no doubt, all windows in the church and chapel were filled with coloured glass, but all were destroyed by ruthless 'reformers.' Alban Butler writing before 1756, and drawing his information from a letter received by the Rev. R. Farrington, then Vicar of Clynnog Fawr, says :—

'The Church, built of beautiful stone, is so large and magnificent as to remain to this day the greatest ornament and wonder of the whole country, especially St. Beuno's Chapel, which is joined to the Church by a portico. In this chapel the fine painted or stained glass in the large windows is much effaced and destroyed, except a large figure of our Saviour extended on the cross.'

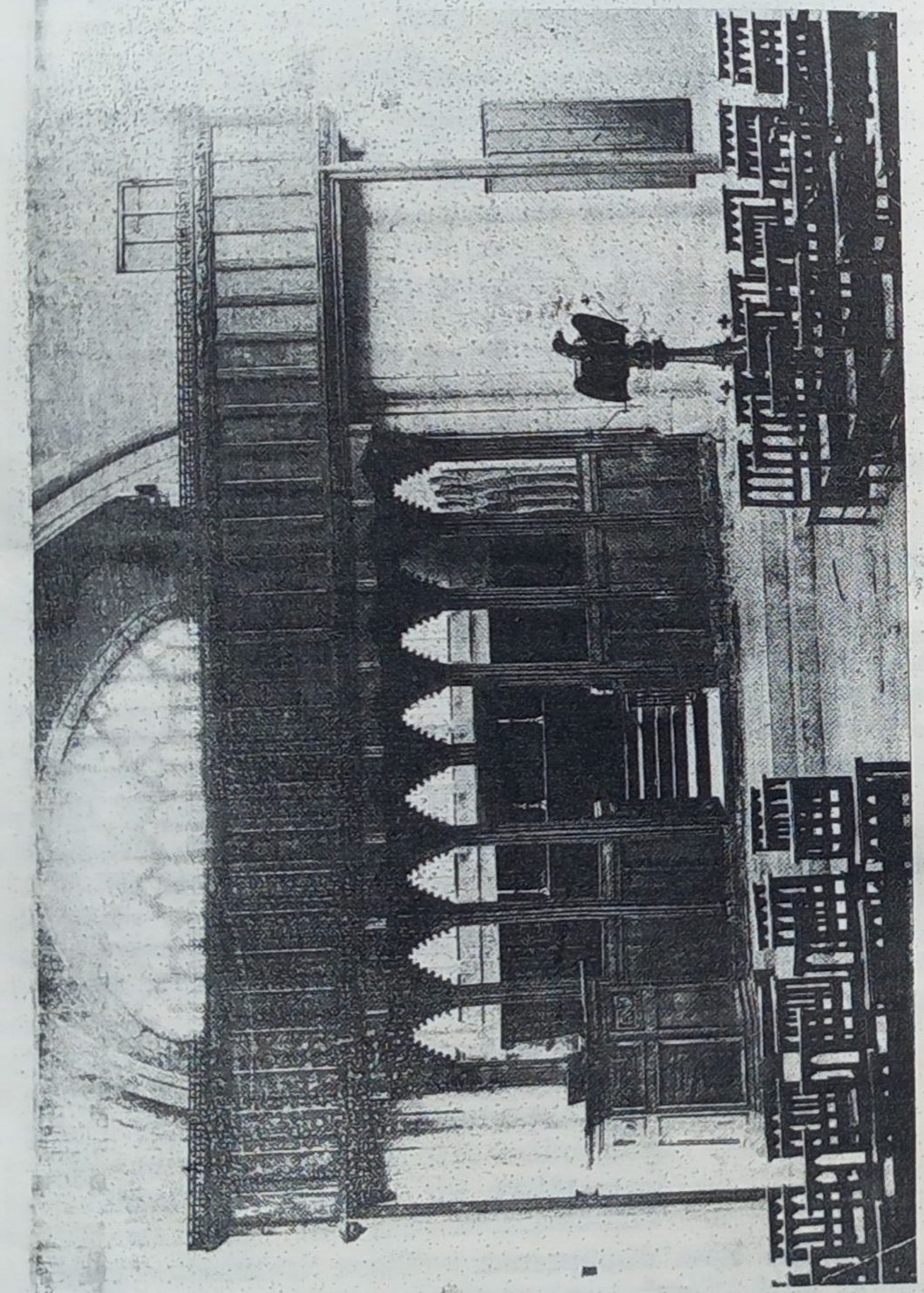
The roof of the nave should be particularly noted.

"The fine panelled roof of the Nave of which the rosettes ornamenting the knobs at the junction of the ribs separating the panels, equal anything I have met with elsewhere, in the sharpness of their execution and the elegance of their endless ornamental details." (Mr. J. O. Westwood, in Archaeologia Cambrensis 1846).

In the Chancel, the fourteen original stalls of the Prebends still remain in a good state of preservation. In the Chancel too are to be seen the 'piscina' (a stone basin used by the priest for washing his hands, before, or during mass, and for cleaning the chalice after use) and three 'sedilia,' (a set of seats intended for the priest, deacon and subdeacon). In the East wall, to the right of the altar, there is a small recessed locker or 'Aumbrey,' where there used to be found a small square slab with a Latin inscription :—

Hec animam
Quam celica
Regna bearunt
Non animas a
Giles terrea
Tumba Capit

This has now disappeared. There is another small Aumbrey in the South transept.



THE ROOD SCREEN

In front of the chancel the screen still remains. Part of it is of course modern, but the main framing is of oak, and original.

" In medieval times the Rood Screen was the place whence the deacon sang the gospel at Mass on the great festivals. There would be a procession from the Sanctuary down the nave and back, it would then pass, in this church through the door in the east wall of the south transept on to the screen. In more recent times the Rood Loft was occupied by the ' Orchestra.' "

(J. D. Eglwys Beuno Sant).

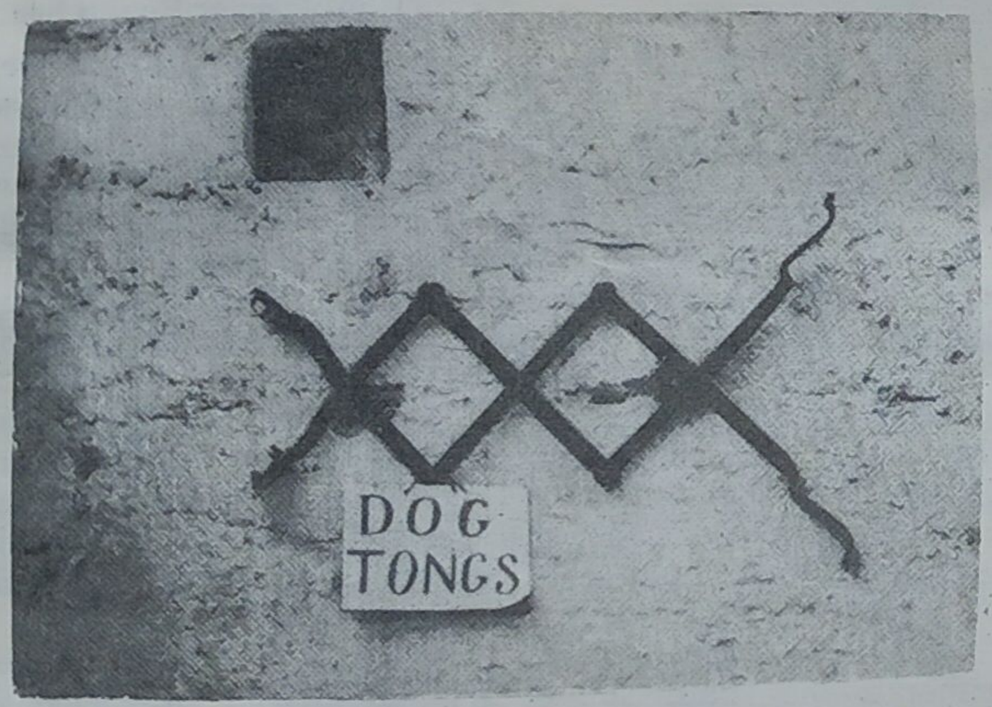
The Rood was destroyed long before the parapets were removed in 1856, and in that year the screen was further mutilated, and a portion of the west front removed to accommodate the pulpit which was placed on top of the high pews.

The monuments in the church are few. The most striking is an altar-tomb on which are two recumbent figures, and round in relievo, seven smaller ones, erected to the memory of William Glynne of Lleuar, his wife, and their seven children. Another commemorates his son-in-law and successor by the right of marriage, to the demesne of Lleuar, George Twistleton, who was of a Yorkshire family, and holding a Colonel's commission, was very active in the Parliamentarian cause, and defeated and took prisoner that brave Commander and zealous loyalist Sir John Owen of Clennenau, in the battle of Talar Hir in 1648.

In the North transept, there is a brass plate to commemorate the young son of William Glynne of Lleuar and brother of Mary Glynne wife of George Twistleton.

In the south transept are to be seen a pair of old dog tongs. At one time, when dogs abounded in great numbers in the district (long before dog tax days) people, from Squire downwards took them with them to church. To regulate their behaviour, almost every parish possessed a modestly paid official termed the ' dog whipper.' Sometimes tongs replaced whips for the removal of ill-behaved dogs, and Clynnog Church has preserved this rather rare instrument made of iron (wooden tongs are also to be found) with short, pointed spikes at one end for laying hold of the offender. Inscribed on them are the

words " Revd. H. Wms. Vicar, J.J., W.E. Wars (probably Church wardens) also the date 1815. This may be the year in which the tongs were repaired.



"Cyff Beuno" (St. Beuno's Chest)

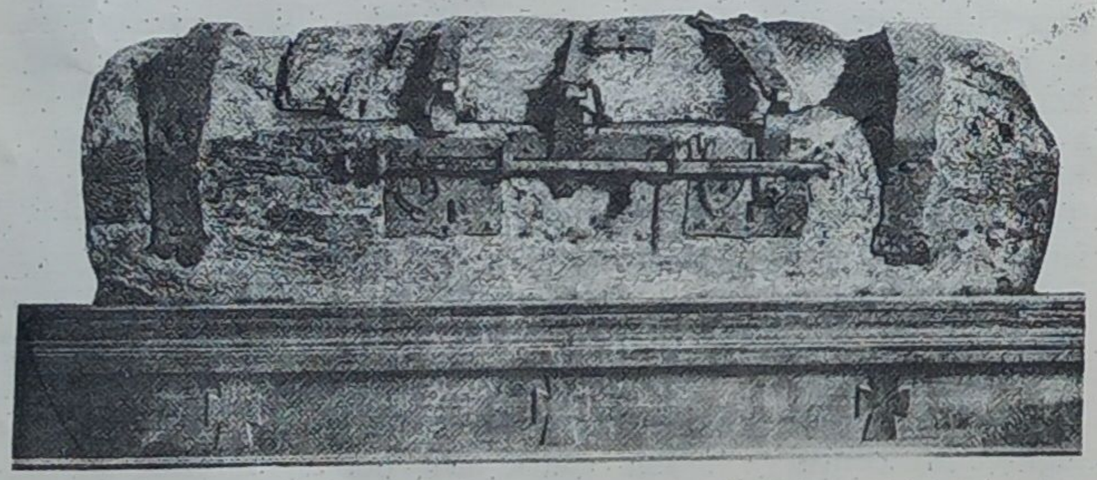
A RELIC which immediately draws the attention of the visitor to Clynnog church is " Cyff Beuno," now preserved in a glass case behind the main door. It is an old chest hollowed out of one piece of timber, nearly four feet long and one and a quarter feet thick. The top piece is sawn off in the form of a cover, and has a slit in it whereby money offerings could be introduced into the chest. At one time it was secured with three locks. A little over a century ago, the custom still prevailed of making an offering of calves and lambs which happened to have ' nôd Beuno ' (Mark of Beuno) upon them. The animals were brought by the farmers to the churchwardens of Clynnog on Trinity Sunday,who then sold them and deposited the money in Cyff Beuno.

Writing of the ' nôd ' or mark found on newly born calves and lambs, Dr. R. Alun Roberts of Bangor, writes, " Considerable interest has recently been awakened in the mark known as ' Nôd Beuno ' . . . a slit or dent occasionally met with in the ears of Welsh cattle at birth. Though unknown to many experienced breeders, it is fairly persistent in the herds of others, particularly in Caernarvonshire. Less than a generation ago it was known in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, but appears to be very rarely met with there now, The existence of a similar mark in Jersey cattle, noted later. suggests at least the possibility that the monks had introduced from the South, or more probably France, cattle bearing the mark and claimed as a right those of their descendants in which it appeared. The practice of surrendering beast to Beuno's Church probably lapsed towards the end of the eighteenth century. The mark still persists among cattle. but I have met no shepherd in Snowdonia who has heard of its existence in sheep."

As stated, Trinity Sunday was the great day for bringing offerings to " Cyff Beuno.

" On Trinity Sunday great numbers resort to the wakes at Clynnog, and formerly brought offerings." (Butler, in Lives of the Saints), and again, " Trinity Sunday was the great day for ' pilgrimages ' to St. Beuno's Shrine." (Brown Willis).

Money from the sale of cattle was not then the only alms put into Cyff Beuno, it was also placed there as a kind of Sin offering, and the oblations were made according to a prescribed form, viz., " Here I offer to God four pence for my private sins, on which account the Almighty is now punishing me, to be given for the same service that the Blessed Saints used to offer, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen. (J. Evans, in ' Beauties of England and Wales,' from an old Welsh MS. found in Cyff Beuno).



CYFF BEUNO

Y "Diboeth," or "Book of Beuno."

THE most interesting and valuable relic of St. Beuno, now unfortunately lost, is the Book of Beuno or Y " Diboeth " (unburnt) not ' Tiboeth ' as it has often but erroneously been referred to.

In the charter confirming the gift of land made by Gwyddaint to St. Beuno, the donor expressed a desire to have his name inscribed in the " Book of Beuno." In the passage quoted from the Records of Caernarvon, this old document is referred to as the ' Graphus Sancti Beunoni.' The tenor of that passage seems to show that Beuno's Book contained among other things, an account of the early charters and donations relating to Clynnog Church. Rowlands refers in his ' Mona Antiqua ' to this book and classes it with the "Ecclesiastical histories " written by Dubricius and Tysilio. It is there called the " Book of Twrog." In Rowlands' time it had disappeared, but apparently it had been well-known to the scholars of the preceding generation.

Dr. John Davies of Mallwyd, in his famous Latin-Welsh Dictionary (1632) refers to the book under the title of ' Tiboeth ' or Un-burnt, as follows :.—

" This was the name of Beuno's Book which was in the Church of Celynog in Arfon, with a black stone upon it; it was written by Twrog in the time of King Cadfan, and escaped destruction when the Church was burnt down. I saw this book said T.W. (Thomas Williams of Trefriw) in the year 1594."

An old poet refers to this book and to the ' black stone ' upon it in the following lines :—(he compares the eye of a young woman to the black stone of y Diboeth)

' Llygad fel glain cawad coeth
Tebyg i faen y Tiboeth.' (Sypyn Kyfeiliog or Iolo Goch, c.1390).

' What the occasion was when Clynnog was burnt and the book saved cannot now be determined, what with civil wars and the inroads of English, Dane and Norman, the previous volume must have had many an escape' wrote Fr. J. H Pollen, and it is the sad truth that there is little hope that this most valuable document will ever be recovered.

The Mazer Bowl

THE most valuable treasure of antiquity in Clynnog Church is the ' Mazer Bowl.' The word ' Mazer ' is derived from the Middle English ' Maser ' meaning maple wood of which the bowls of these vessels are usually made. The following is the account of this mazer given by St. John Hope in ' English Mediaeval Drinking Bowls ' 1887). " The Bowl of this mazer is of dark maple-wood and quite plain. The band is of the usual late form and measures 1¼ inch in depth outside, and 1 inch inside. It is of silver-gilt with characteristic belts of four-leaved flowers and rayed fringe, and bears the following inscription in black letters.

IHS NAZARENUS REX IUDEORUM
FILI DEI MISERERE MEI

(Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, Son of God, Have mercy on me)." With leaves and foliage for stops. The print is of silver-gilt, and consists of a plainly-moulded boss, enclosing a silver plate, engraved with a number of flowers, originally enamelled. Nothing is known of the history of this Mazer. Date Circa 1480—90."

In 1935 keen interest was concentrated in the Art Sale room on a Mazer bowl belonging to Lord Halifax from Temple Newsam, the grand old Ingram home near Leeds. Lord Halifax's Mazer had an incription in Gothic letters, and dated 1470. According to a cutting from the *Daily Sketch* in 1935, Mazer Bowls are very limited in number, and when one comes into the market it realises a high price. Early in this century a mazer owned by the Macgregors was sold by order of Admiral Sir Malcolm Macgregor, Chief of the clan, it brought the record price of £10,000. Several years before this, one was sold for nearly £8,000. What, one may ask is the value of the Clynnog Mazer Bowl today ?

Alms Dishes

CLYNNOG Church possesses amongst her treasures of greater importance, two strange alms boxes or dishes. The shorter one is not uncommon in type, but the longer is quite unique. It is made of metal, like a warming pan, and has an extremely long handle, so made, no doubt, that the dish could reach across the long pews which were to be found in the church at one time.

The Bells

THE three bells belonging to the church are hung in the tower. Two were re-hung in 1773, and bear the dates 1623 and 1624. The third was supplied by the family of the late Rev. Charles Elsee of Rugby and Clynnog. This weighs a ton, and bears the following legend :—

" IN REMEMBRANCE OF
CHARLES AND MARY ANNE ELSEE
I WAS GIVEN TO CLYNNOG FAWR 1924
LAUDATE DOMINUM."

The three bells were hung in 1924 in a new frame of teak wood.

Sundial and Holy Well

OUTSIDE the church itself there are at least two objects of interest. In the churchyard, near the S.W. angle of St. Beuno's Chapel is the ancient Sun dial. It belongs to an anglo-saxon type, and its purpose was to mark the time of the canonical hours. For many years it was lost from its home, but was eventually discovered on a farm in the neighbourhood where it was in use as a slab to hold milk pails. It was placed in its present position in 1930, and in 1951 was scheduled as an ancient monument.

The other object of interest is the Holy Well of St Beuno which lies about 200 yards from the church on the Pwllheli road. There are several wells bearing Beuno's name to be found, e.g., Ffynnon Feuno in Gwredog, another at Penmorfa, Gwyddelwern and Tremeirchion.

Fr. Pollen in his book " Traces of a great Welsh Saint " writes how the old churchwarden at Gwyddelwern told him that he remembered his mother relating that people in her day used still to bathe in the holy well, believing in its miraculous powers ; and water was brought thence to parish churches for baptisms. A writer in the ' Cymmrodor ' of January 1893 stated that there were some even at that time who firmly believed in the medicinal value of the water in Ffynnon Beuno in Clynnog. It was the custom to dip the consumptive and epileptic patients in the holy water, and lay them to rest overnight on St. Beuno's tomb. And in his " Tours " Pennant writes that he saw a paralysed man from Merioneth reposing on the tomb—a feather bed being substituted for rushes.

Eglwys y Bedd (St. Beuno's Chapel) and the "Cloister"

THE chapel is built on the south-west side of the Church, and connected with the main building by a narrow cloister or passage about five yards long. This passage is roofed with long slabs of granite which are covered over on the outside with stones set in mortar. Sometime in the 18th century the cloister was used as a parish lock-up, hence the word " Rheinws " Brown Willis (Hein-house or Bishop's Gaol) the favourite name by which it is known to the parishioners.

The chapel itself is a simple parallelogram, with a doorway connecting it with the vaulted passage between it and the tower.

St. Beuno no doubt, built his original little church of clay and wattle on the spot where the chapel now stands. Eglwys y Bedd (The Church of the Shrine) is so called because the most prevalent tradition is that St. Beuno was buried here. The tradition is that when St. Beuno's corpse

was being brought to the monastery for burial, two other parties met the cortege at Ynys Yr Arch (Casket Island) in the Bwlch Mawr pass at the other end of the parish and far from the sea. One party claimed the body for Bardsey Island, the other for Nevin. The controversy raged until the disputants agreed to argue further in the morning. Then however, there were three coffins, similar in every respect. Each party chose one, and there were three burials, but Clynnog people maintain that the coffin containing the Saint's body was the one interred within the chapel walls.

In 1913, when the present chapel was restored, foundations of an early stone building were disclosed on the same spot. Bluish stones inserted in the chapel floor mark the floor space of that old building which was standing in 1536 when Leland saw it and wrote in his " Itinerary." " The old chirche wher S. Beuno lyith is close by the new."

Mr. Stallybrass, the architect under whose direction the chapel was restored in 1913, made the valuable discovery of the existence of foundations of that ancient building within the walls and beneath the old floor of the present chapel. They were about three feet thick, enclosing a rectangular space about 18 feet by 9 feet 9 inches, and parallel to the walls of the present chapel.

" Was that ' Old Chirche ' the first church built by St. Beuno in Clynnog, or was it the church built after the ravaging of Clynnog Fawr by the Danes in 978, or a still later church," asks Rev. John Davies in his booklet on Clynnog Fawr. No definite answer can be given. In any case, Mr. Stallybrass made two important discoveries.

1. The walls of the present chapel were built on old foundations.

2. No fewer than thirteen burials have been made around the ' old chirche.'

Most of these burials are within the chapel sanctuary and the rest outside, but close to the east wall of the ' old chirche ' whose foundations were discovered in 1913.

In his letter to Alban Butler, the Rev. R. Farrington, Sometime Vicar of Clynnog Fawr wrote :—

" Opposite to this crucifix (in the chapel) about three yards from the east window, is St. Beuno's tomb, raised

above the ground, and covered with a large stone." Some years later Thomas Pennant who toured Wales in 1770 wrote :

" In the midst is the tomb of the Saint, plain and altar shaped. Votaries were wont to have great faith in him, and did not doubt that by means of a night's lodging on his tomb, a cure would be found for all diseases. It was customary to cover it with rushes, and leave on it till morning sick children, after making them first undergo ablution in the neighbouring holy well ; and I myself once saw on it a feather bed, on which a poor paralytic from Merionethshire had laid the whole night, after undergoing the same ceremony." (Tour through Wales).

Twenty years later Gough remarked that the plain altar-shaped stone on the tomb had been " whitewashed " possibly to hide a certain mark on the stone, with regard to which a pretty devotion was practised by the peasants of the neighbourhood.

In 1790 the tomb was still standing, but in 1793 (according to Fr. Pollen) a correspondent wrote in the " Gentleman's Magazine " as follows :—

" Lord Newborough who lives in the neighbourhood, has lately caused the old Saint's ashes to be disturbed, as he ordered the grave to be opened, and search to be made for the coffin . . . but owing to their not having dug deep enough . . . nothing has been found."

All traces of the old tomb vanished, and the chapel was turned into a schoolroom. Eben Fardd, the famous Welsh bard used it as a school from 1827 to 1849, and according to his diary, it was then in a disreputable condition.

" The chapel has been restored," (wrote Fr. Pollen in 1894) " and a shoddy slate pavement obliterates all traces of the old shrine. The noble outline of the chapel is indeed still intact, but its whitened walls and blank windows only make its dirt and desolation the more painfully conspicuous."

In 1913 however, during the vicariate of the Rev. T. H. Richards, the chapel was carefully restored, and in 1929, during the vicariate of the Rev. John Davies, the sum of £8,000 was collected, and Eglwys y Bedd was again improved and beautified as part of the general restoration.

The Pilgrimage

In 1950 a great pilgrimage led by the Bishop of Bangor started from Clynnog. The Church was filled to capacity and thousands of people thronged outside. Mass was celebrated in Church and the Bishop gave an address. From Clynnog the pilgrims continued to Pistyll and Nevin, Llangwnadl and Aberdaron, and the Bishop and a few others, later crossed to the holy island of Bardsey. The great pilgrimage cross was then brought back to Clynnog and now rests behind the High Altar. The only inscription on the red Cross is " Pererindod 1950 " (Pilgrimage 1950).

Brodyr Beuno (*Brotherhood of Beuno*)

A small village with a little over 50 communicants cannot hope by itself to maintain this Church properly ; repairs and renovations are constantly needed.

In 1947 the Rev. John Davies, then Vicar of Clynnog Fawr made a suggestion that a permanent religious body be formed, with definite religious duties, which should include the care of all the buildings, so as practically to relieve (as far as that were possible) the Vicar and Churchwardens of their duties in respect of repairs to the buildings, and of their upkeep.

In April 1951 there was initiated a movement which made a nation wide appeal to the lovers of this magnificent old church. A new Society known as " Brodyr Beuno " (Brothers of Beuno) was formed. Services were held in the Church all day, and the Bishop of Bangor, who was present, and delivered the sermon at evensong, gave it his blessing. This society has the same basis as the " Friends of the Cathedral " and every lover of the Church may join. The minimum membership fee is 2/6, and the money will be devoted to preserve the fabrics of this magnificent church, which is a lasting monument to St. Beuno's great work of evangelising, and a magnificent witness day by day of the glories of the Christian faith, and a link which forms a bond between present worshippers and the past in Wales.

List of books consulted in drawing up this Narrative :—

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The compiler is greatly indebted to Professor E. G. Bowen of Aberystwyth; Dr. R. Alun Roberts, of Bangor; and the Editor of the "*North Wales Chronicle*" for permission to quote from their publications, and to Sir Ifor Williams for much help in preparing this edition.